

# THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE  
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS  
(Section of the Library Association)

Vol. XXXVII

MARCH-APRIL, 1944

No. 2

HON. EDITOR: W. B. STEVENSON

Hornsey Public Libraries

## Announcements

**S**TUDENTS are reminded that applications for the correspondence courses, in all sections, to commence in April, must reach Mrs. S. W. Martin, Hon. Education Secretary, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24, by 30th March, after which date no application may be considered. For all particulars of subjects and fees, see the *Library Association Year Book*.

The index to the 1943 volume has been published this month and should have been forwarded with this issue to all subscribers. As a matter of economy, only 350 copies of the index have been printed. Members who wish to obtain copies should apply to Mrs. S. W. Martin, the Honorary Education Secretary.

The South Wales Division has arranged a meeting on the proposals of the Library Association for post-war reorganisation. The speaker will be Mr. E. Sydney, F.L.A., Chairman of the Post-War Committee of the Library Association, who will elucidate the proposals. The meeting will be held at Cardiff Central Library, on Wednesday, 19th April, at 2.45 p.m.

The attention of members is drawn to the list of officers of the Association printed in this number, and more especially to the functions performed by those officers. Much needless correspondence is caused by sending enquiries to the wrong officer.

## Council Notes

The Council met on 9th February, the President (Mr. J. T. Gillett) in the chair. The main business consisted of consideration of Divisional reports on the Library Association's "Post-War proposals." The Council acknowledged with satisfaction the decision of the Emergency Committee to hold a conference of all Library Association

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members to discuss the Post-War proposals. The A.A.L. Council recommended that this conference should be held not later than June, 1944.

The following comments on the Post-War proposals were forwarded to the Library Association :—

*Presentation.*—The Council feels that the pamphlet lacks clarity and precision, the writing being involved and vague. It is also suggested that "adequate service" should be defined in terms of books, staff buildings and extension work.

*Library Authority and Library Areas.*—The Council considers the minimum proposed library areas too large, and reaffirms its previous objection to taking complete control out of the hands of local authorities.

*Library Staffs.*—The Council reaffirms its previous contention that there should be equal opportunities for men and women, and that women should not be required to resign their posts on marriage. The Council also suggests that "service staff" should be required to possess only the same qualifications required for entry into the "clerical staff" of an authority; and that their salaries should not be less than those of the general clerical staff.

*Central Classification and Cataloguing.*—The Council suggests that this work would be more appropriately performed by the British Museum than by other non-copyright libraries.

The Council appointed a sub-committee to analyse and co-ordinate the various proposals received from Divisions regarding Post-War Education. The Sub-Committee will present a memorandum to the next meeting of the Council.



## Censorship\*

J. M. Gladstone

WE are accustomed to regard the freedom of the Press as one of our fundamental privileges as Englishmen. As long ago as 1760 John Wilkes declared: "The liberty of the Press is the birthright of a Briton and is justly esteemed the foremost bulwark of the liberties of this country." This statement was in reality more in the nature of a challenge to authority than a statement of fact, and Wilkes was one of those who suffered for his determination to establish this liberty. I propose to trace the rise and development of State control of the Press in the 16th and 17th centuries, its gradual decline as a political weapon in the 18th century, until in the 19th and early-20th centuries its function has degenerated into that of Mrs. Grundy's umbrella.

It is considerably easier for us in 1943 to project ourselves mentally into the 17th century than it was for our parents and grandparents for whom the future meant ever-increasing prosperity, and the rapid approach of a golden age of peace and enlightenment. Condemned to watch for three years the brutal stamping out of culture all over Europe, the sacking and looting of cities, the burning of libraries; having voluntarily given up many of our own hard-won liberties to preserve our existence as a nation, perhaps we can look back with a certain amount of sympathy to the time

\* Paper read at joint meeting of the North Midland Branch of the L.A. and the East Midland Branch of the A.A.L., 25th September, 1943.

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when our constitution was being shaped and respect those who imposed restrictions, as well as those who fought against them.

The number of restrictions imposed by any government is in inverse proportion to its internal stability and external power, and the history of the freedom of the Press in this country mirrors the gradual establishment of the constitution, and the development of Great Britain as a world power.

From the first establishment of printing presses in England there was a certain amount of State control. In the first half of the 16th century this was mainly directed against aliens in the trade.

A statute of 1534—"Act for prynters and binders of books"—stated that "No person shall buy to sell again any printed books brought from any parts out of the King's obeisance ready bound in boards leather or parchment," and prohibited the retail sale by aliens of any printed books. This was the time when the King, Henry VIII, was in conflict with the Pope, and in 1534 the latter's authority in England was abolished and the King took the title of "Supreme head on earth of the Church of England." By so doing he set up a national sovereign State in the modern sense, exempt from outside interference, and the severity of the persecution of the Catholics in this reign and in that of Elizabeth was a defence of this position.

A statute of 1533 made it treasonable by writing, printing or other external act to do or cause to be done anything to the peril of the King, or to the disturbance or interruption of his enjoyment of the crown, or of the succession. A proclamation of 1538 prohibited the importation of English books printed abroad, and the printing of any English book unless the contents had been previously examined by the privy council or some person appointed by it. The publishing of any book of Scripture in English was also prohibited till it had been examined by the King, a privy councillor or a bishop. And so began the censorship of the Press, to be carried on with ever-increasing severity for the next 150 years. Remembering the underlying theory of the unity of Church and State, and the belief that whoever attacked or threatened the one necessarily attacked the other, we shall see that while most of the matter censored was theological, the aim of the censorship was political.

Mary's attempt to stem the tide of Protestantism and Nationalism was short lived, but one of her measures had far-reaching effects on the printing trade, and indeed on literature as a whole; this was the incorporation of the Stationers' Company in 1556. The preface to the charter leaves no doubt but that it was granted as a tool in the repression of sedition and heresy: "Know ye that we considering and manifestly perceiving that certain seditious and heretical books, rhymes and treatises are daily published and printed by divers scandalous, malicious, schismatical and heretical persons, not only moving our subjects and lieges to sedition and disobedience against us, our crown and dignity, but also to renew and move very great and detestable heresies against the faith and sound doctrine of Mother church, and wishing to provide a suitable remedy in this behalf . . . incorporate the Master and keeper or warden and commonalty of the mystery or art of a stationer of the city of London."

The charter prohibits any person from printing within the realm without the licence of the company, except patentees, and grants the company power to search for, seize and destroy or appropriate any unlicensed books. This charter was ratified by Elizabeth in 1559, and it was intended to serve the dual purpose of suppressing sedition and establishing the trade on a sound commercial basis. The Stationers'

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Company thus became the official authority over the whole of the book trade of the country. From then on nearly all decrees regulating the printing and sale of books were issued in the form of instructions to the Master and wardens of the Company who had to enforce them. From the point of view of the Government the principle of "set a printer to catch a printer" seems on the face of it a most efficient method of control.

In 1559 injunctions for the licensing of books ordered that "no manner of person shall print any manner of book or paper . . . except the same be first licensed by her Majesty by express words in writing, or by six of her privy councillors, or be perused and licensed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of London, the Chancellors of both Universities and the Archdeacon also of the place where any such shall be printed, or by any two of them."

It might be supposed that sedition died a natural death under these drastic and extensive measures, but on the contrary it was driven underground, and the number of proclamations and injunctions during the reign, the records of the trials of printers, the mutilations of authors, and the burning of books, are a witness to the comparative ineffectiveness of the law, and to the extensiveness of the underground press. Proclamations of various dates from 1568 onwards continued to order the destruction of heretical or treasonable books, and to threaten the printers, publishers, importers and owners of such books with various penalties. In 1565 the Bishop of London and three other high commissioners commanded the wardens of the Stationers' Company to seize certain stationers in St. Paul's churchyard accused of "scattering and setting abroad certain English books of corrupt doctrine to the defaming of religion, established by public authority," and to keep them in prison until they should find sureties in £40 each. By direction of the Commissioners, searchers were appointed by the Company to "search what every printer printeth."

Another aspect of 16th and 17th century printing which tended to keep the control of the Press in the hands of authority was the granting of Royal monopolies in the printing of certain works, or certain classes of works. By 1583 certain individuals possessed the right to print all copies of Bibles, prayer books, psalms, catechisms, statutes, proclamations, law books, dictionaries and so on. Disputes over these monopolies raged in the Stationers' Company and among all the printing trade for some years from 1577. In that year it was complained that the patents held by Jucge, Tottel, Day and others were ruining all other printers. There was another aspect of the matter—by the enforced absence of competition there was no guarantee that an author could ever get his book printed, for if the monopolist did not want to work, there was no reason why he should. It was said of Tottel in 1583 that he had "three presses and useth but one." A fact, I think, which is not without interest at the present day. One of the results of the monopolies was of course the prevalence of piracy among the unprivileged printers. To remedy these evils the provisions of the licensing act for the entry of books intended for printing in the register of the Stationers' Company, which had fallen into a certain disuse, were re-enforced, some of the monopolies were redistributed, and it was made possible to transfer the right to print a book by re-entry in the register.

The extent and activity of the secret Press is indicated by the severity of the enactment of 1586, which provided that all printers should deliver a note of the number of their presses and of any which they should erect hereafter, prohibited any printing except in London, Oxford and Cambridge, and forbade the erection of any new presses until the existing number should be diminished. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the

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Bishop of London were to decide when a new printer was necessary, and were to inform the Stationers' Company, who were then to elect one of their members to have the grant of a licence.

During the latter part of the 16th century a new danger was threatening the unity of Church and State. This was the rise of Puritanism, and the attack on prelacy. It was eventually to be a large part of the causes of the revolution in the 17th century, and in Elizabeth's reign it appeared in the famous Martin Marprelate controversy, during which for five years an anonymous writer, or group of writers, under the name Martin Marprelate printed a series of anti-episcopal pamphlets written in a somewhat scurrilous manner, and successfully evaded the 16th-century Gestapo by moving the press about the country from one private house to another, until one was finally run to earth in Manchester in 1589, and John Penry, the supposed Martin, was a year or two later condemned to death for his activities.

The 17th century opened with the death of Elizabeth and the succession of James I. It was to be one long struggle between King and Parliament for the possession of power, and in ecclesiastical matters no less a struggle for the preservation of the established Church against the Catholics and the Puritans.

One of the first books to be suppressed by James was Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the world*, which was called in at the King's command "especially for being too saucy in censuring princes."

The licensing act and the injunctions for entering books in the Stationers' register were of course still in force, but there is evidence to show that they were by no means always observed. In 1622 the Court of Assistants of the Company directed that no printer was to print any book not entered in the hall book.

With the accession of Charles I and the rise to power of Laud, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, the controversies between the King and Parliament, and the High Church party and the Puritans became more and more serious and embittered, and savage penalties were inflicted for writing and printing anything against the Church or the monarchy. Charles regarded himself as the bulwark of the constitution against sedition, and the Puritans were regarded as schismatics dangerously threatening the unity of Church and State on which the peace and indeed the very existence of the State depended.

In 1628 Alexander Leighton published *Syon's plea against prelacy*, in which he said of the bishops that they were of no use in God's house and called them caterpillars, moths and cankerworms. The book strongly expressed the anti-episcopal feeling that was rising in the country. The Star Chamber fined Leighton £10,000, the High Commission court deprived him of his ministry, sentenced him to be whipped, to be pilloried, to lose his ears, to have his nose slit, to be branded on his cheeks with S.S. (Sower of Sedition), and to be imprisoned for life.

A few years later William Prynne published *Histriomastix, or the player's scourge*, in which he argued that stage plays, besides being sinful and heathenish, were "intolerable mischiefs to churches, to republics, to the manners, minds and souls of men." His remarks about female actors were thought to be aimed at the Queen, and the matter came before the Star Chamber. The book was condemned to be burnt by the hangman, the first instance in this country of what became a fairly common practice, and the author was sentenced to lose his membership of Lincoln's Inn, to be degraded at his University (Oxford), to stand in the pillory at Westminster and Cheap-

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side, to lose both his ears, to pay a fine of £5,000 to the King, and to be imprisoned for life.

In 1637 two other authors, Bastwick and Burton, were sentenced to similar punishments, Bastwick for his Litany, in which he attacked the bishops, the doctrine of the real presence, and the church prayer book, and Burton for a book entitled *For God and King*, which consisted of two sermons in which he complains of the encroachments of the bishops on the power of the King. Bastwick says "as many prelates in England, so many vipers in the bowels of Church and State," and calls them "the very polecats, stoats, weasels and minivers in the warren of Church and State, Anti-Christ's little toes." Burton, in his turn, calls them "limbs of the beast, and ravening wolves."

In this year (1637) the Star Chamber passed a decree providing that in addition to the compulsory licensing of all English books by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London or the University Chancellors, no books should be imported from abroad for sale without a catalogue of them being first sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Bishop of London, who by their chaplains or others were to superintend the unloading of such books.

In 1641 the Long Parliament abolished the courts of Star Chamber and High Commission, and for two years there was virtually no control over the Press. In 1642 the Civil War began, and in 1643 Parliament became aware of the danger of an uncontrolled Press and issued an order re-establishing the licensing act. No book was to be printed, bound or stitched or put to sale unless first licensed and entered in the Stationers' register. Appropriate people were authorised to license the various classes of books, and officials were empowered to search for unlicensed presses. The wording of the order is in the same tone as the earlier enactments. "An order of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament for the regulating of printing and for suppressing the great late abuses and frequent disorders in printing many false, scandalous, seditious, libellous and unlicensed pamphlets to the great defamation of Religion and Government."

The chief claim to fame of this order is that it provoked the most magnificent plea for freedom not only of the Press, though that is its avowed object, but incidentally of the individual, that has ever been written—Milton's *Areopagitica*, or a tract for the liberty of unlicensed printing. Published 300 years ago, much of it applies with extraordinary force to the present day, and his plea for liberty to read all manner of books should be emblazoned on the doors of every public library. Unfortunately most of us are forced to read it at school, at an age when the liberty of the Press means less than nothing to us, but it should form a kind of professional oath which every librarian should take on entering the calling.

The number of books condemned to be burnt during the Commonwealth and Protectorate is evidence that the severity of the law was no effective deterrent to the underground press. On reading Farrer's *Books condemned to be burnt* one receives the impression that the whole of England during the 17th century was one vast bonfire, stoked alternately by bishops and privy councillors.

At the Restoration all enactments of the Commonwealth automatically lapsed, and in 1662 a new licensing act was passed. This empowered the messengers of the Star Chamber by warrant under sign manual, or under the hand of the Secretaries of State, or of the Master and wardens of the Stationers' Company, "to search all houses and shops where they shall know, or upon some probable reason suspect any books or papers to be printed, bound or stitched" without licence, and to seize the books and

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the offenders and bring them before justices of the peace, who were to commit them to prison until trial. And if the searchers found any books which they suspected to contain matters contrary to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England or subversive of the State and Government, they were to bring them before the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, or the Secretaries of State, "who shall take up such further course for the suppressing thereof as to them or any of them shall seem fit."

At this time Roger Lestrangle obtained the office of Surveyor of the Press, and part of his duty was to see that the Stationers' Company fully exercised its powers of control of the trade. There was a great deal of litigation and many illegal presses were suppressed. The licensing act of 1662 was only passed for a limited number of years and had to be renewed from time to time, until in 1694 it was allowed to lapse. From then on, except in time of war, there has been no censorship of literature before publication, in this country.

Authors and printers were now able to publish more freely, but once published, books and pamphlets were subject to the law of libel. Within the scope of the law of libel came not only personal attacks on ministers of the Government, but also general attacks on the existing administration. To reflect on the known laws of the land was a libel. During the 18th century, when the Whig and Tory parties were engaged in the most violent struggle for power, and such writers as Defoe and Swift, to say nothing of innumerable hacks, were employed to write controversial pamphlets, it is not surprising that there were an enormous number of prosecutions, fines and imprisonments of authors, publishers and printers. Defoe was sentenced to the pillory and two years' imprisonment for his tract *The shortest way with dissenters*, a satirical pamphlet which under the pretence of advising the High Church party to deal severely with dissenters in reality exposes their tyrannical principles. It was considered to be likely to cause a breach of the peace, and its author was consequently charged with criminal libel.

Until the end of the century the jury's only function in a trial for libel was to decide whether in fact the author and printer charged had published the book or pamphlet in question, and by the judgment in a case in 1717 it was laid down that a printer was deemed to have printed a libel if it was found in his shop, unless he could bring good proof to the contrary. It was for the judge, and not for the jury, to decide whether the matter of the book or pamphlet were libellous or not. The passing of Fox's libel act in 1792 remedied this. From then on it was for the jury to decide on evidence presented whether the pamphlet were or were not libellous.

Apart from the struggle to amend the libel laws, the chief struggle on the part of the Press in the 18th century was for liberty to print reports of the debates in Parliament. During this century the newspaper developed in all essentials its modern form, and from the early stages several papers gave some kind of reports of the proceedings in Parliament. This was regarded as a breach of privilege, and until 1772 heavy penalties were constantly inflicted for it.

The Government's attitude in this matter was not entirely without justification. In the absence of any system of shorthand it was impossible to give a verbatim account of the proceedings, and the accusation that the reports gave a false impression of what was taking place was fairly just. In the same way an intentionally false impression could only too easily be given by a biased reporter. "I have read some debates of this house, Sir," said Walpole, "in which I have been made to speak the very reverse



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of what I meant." The public, however, was determined to have reports of the debates, and eventually, in 1772, the restrictions were allowed to lapse.

By the beginning of the 19th century then, official regulation of the Press has ceased. It is, however, by common law, still an indictable misdemeanour to publish any obscene matter whether by writing or pictures. The test of criminality is whether the matter complained of tends to deprave or corrupt those whose minds are open to immoral influences and who are likely to see the matter published. This seems a regulation to which few people of sense could take exception, but for the fact that it is impossible for any two people to agree as to what constitutes obscenity. However, in this case, the passage of time appears to be the deciding factor, and we have the somewhat curious result that a book such as *Ulysses* is criminal matter and fit food for the flames in one decade and openly published with all the honour of a limited edition in the next.

During the 19th century the unofficial censorship of public opinion was pretty effective against any immorality in literature, and the prudery of the Victorian Age in this respect is not purely an invention of the 20th century. *Adam Bede* was objected to as the "vile outpourings of a lewd woman's mind." Harriet Martineau, though a freethinker, declares that she is unable to read *Vanity fair* from the moral disgust it occasions. Robert Buchanan denounced Rossetti as obscene and immoral, some of his sonnets being "one profuse sweat of animalism." Clement Scott, reviewing Ibsen's play, *Ghosts*, in the 'nineties, calls it "an open drain, a loathsome sore unbandaged, a lazar house with all its doors and windows open. It is bestial, cynical, disgusting, poisonous, sickly, delirious, indecent, loathsome, fetid, literary carrion." Another critic, speaking of George Moore's *Flowers of passion*, calls the author a bestial bard and says the book should be burnt by the public hangman while the author is being whipped at the cart's tail. A copy of Hardy's *Jude the obscure* was actually burnt by a bishop.

The final flare-up of this kind of censorship took place during the 'twenties of the present century, when a somewhat hysterical crusade on behalf of so-called obscenity was carried on by D. H. Lawrence and others. On re-reading Lawrence's pamphlet, *Pornography and obscenity*, one can only feel that he can have done his cause no good by it. The last word remains with Bernard Shaw, "Censorship ends in logical completeness when nobody is allowed to read any books except the books that nobody can read."

Of censorship in libraries a good deal has been said and written. It is indeed a topic of perennial dispute. There are stories of members of library committees who constitute themselves a watch committee and make it their business to pounce on any book which seems to them obscene or immoral, or likely to deprave the public and insist upon its being withdrawn. There are other members of the public who regard any segregation of books as evidence of depravity on the part of the librarian. He, whatever his own opinions, has to make some compromise between the two. In fact, every library has its shelf or shelves of books which may only be obtained by special application, and by bona fide students. In the British Museum this section is called by the Greek letter Phi—"fie, fie." In the French National Library it is known as "Enfer"—Hell. Whether or not there is a purgatory from which after a period of probation offending volumes are eventually promoted to paradise I have not been able to discover.



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### Current Books

BEERBOHM, MAX. *The Poet's corner*. King Penguin. 2s.

This selection of Max Beerbohm's incomparable literary caricatures, with an all too brief appreciation by John Rothenstein, is one of the most pleasing books Penguins have given us. The caricatures are both works of art and literary criticism, and richly humorous into the bargain. A book for all libraries, for rarely has such good value been put between two covers.

LEVIN, HARRY. *James Joyce*. Faber and Faber. 8s. 6d.

"No novel is worth writing after *Ulysses*," said someone: an exaggerated statement, but it contains some truth, for the writings of Joyce seem to indicate the end of an epoch in literature. To those writings, Mr. Levin is one of the best guides; armed with this book, Mr. Gorman's biography and Stuart Gilbert's guide to the labyrinth of "*Ulysses*," one understands the background of Joyce's work completely. Mr. Levin has steeped himself in Joyce's work: he treats it chronologically and elucidates it with biographical detail. There is no shy reverence, no kowtowing about his approach, however, and his criticism is both enlightening and realistic. There is no doubt that Joyce is one of the great novelists of this century; there is no doubt that his books are worth the reading and the pondering. Mr. Levin has established his own stature as a critic and reaffirms that of Joyce as a novelist in a most able and readable book.

MARCHAND, ERNEST. *Frank Norris: a study*. Stanford University Press (Humphrey Milford). 18s. 6d.

Many public libraries have copies of *McTeague* or *Vandover and the brute* on their shelves. They are generally neglected by the public or regarded as reserve stock by the Librarians. Yet the name of Frank Norris is of importance in American literature, for it was he (and possibly David Graham Phillips) who were the precursors of that "naturalism" which led to the novels of Dreiser, Hemingway and Farrell, and which dispelled the sickliness and sentimentality of American literature, prevalent in the 'eighties and 'nineties. Here in this full length story of the novelist, we have a valuable conspectus of Norris's personality and works. Mr. Marchand is an able and learned critic, and his study shows the evidence of much research: this is a book that is deserving of inclusion in our libraries, for it reopens a neglected chapter in American literature.

NIXON, BARBARA. *Raiders overhead*. Lindsay Drummond. 6s.

Gradually, a literature of the blitz is accumulating. Henry Green, William Sansom, and others represent the literary side. Miss Nixon and the Ministry of Information's "Home Front" the factual. *Raiders overhead* is the story of a voluntary warden in South London: the narrative opens with the quiet period up to June, 1940, when the Civil Defence man was considered more of a nuisance than anything else. Miss Nixon then describes the raids increasing to the full fury of the blitz, the "incidents," the life of the shelters, the spirit of the people. There are no purple passages, no high-flown tributes: the book is a narrative of facts told in an economical and discreet style, and is much the better for it. The author has a sense of humour and her book is a fine record.

PENGUIN NEW WRITING. Nos. 17 and 18. Penguin Books. 9d. each.

*New Writing*, though rather irregular in appearance nowadays, continues to print

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significant work by the younger generation. Outstanding in the two numbers under review are instalments of a long story by Frank Sargeson, the New Zealand writer, and a fine description of the R.A.F. by John Summerfield. Joseph Gurnard seems to have assumed the mantle of Fanlarlo, while Walter Allen contributes a thoughtful and intelligent criticism of the novels of Graham Greene. The level of both short-story writing and critical articles remains high, and *New Writing* continues to be our liveliest literary periodical.

SIMMONDS, ERNEST J. *An outline of Modern Russian literature*. Cornell University Press (Humphrey Milford). 18s. 6d.

Professor Simmonds, whom we will remember for his brilliant and erudite biography of Pushkin, here gives a brief outline of Russian literature during the last sixty years. After a short historic review, chapters on the novel, poetry, the symbolist movement, and Soviet literature follow. It is difficult to compress so many facts into less than a hundred pages, and the book necessarily keeps to the "outline" of its title. The facts are all here for the student, and it is to be hoped that the author will give us a fuller history later, for he reveals himself once more as an admirable critic. The selected bibliography at the end of the book is of great value as a guide to translations from the Russian. The high price of this volume will probably restrict its circulation except in the larger libraries.

YEATS, J. B. *Letters of his son W. B. Yeats and others*. Edited by Joseph Hone. Faber and Faber. 16s.

J. B. Yeats, during his lifetime, became famous in the literary life of three cities—London, Dublin and New York. Artist, writer and critic, his interest in life and literature bubbles over in these letters. They reveal the man as he was—lovable, garrulous, witty, full of a gusto for life in all its aspects. Few people at any time can have shown such a capacity for enjoyment combined with such critical acumen. This selection from his correspondence, edited with a memoir by Mr. Hone, is a tribute to one of the great figures of the Irish movement, a man who will long remain a legendary figure.

## Post-War Education

R. Northwood Lock

PARAGRAPH 40 of the "L.A. Proposals" recognises the necessity of "attendance at full-time and part-time Schools of Librarianship" for adequate post-war professional education, and envisages a system analogous to training colleges in the teaching profession. Nothing, however, is said of the lines on which these schools could be planned or the syllabus which might be covered, despite the fact that the latter topic in particular has been the subject of more or less continuous discussion for many years. The Library Association has never yet been able to evolve a scheme of education adequate to the requirements of a growing profession, either from over-consideration for those already established in it, or from fear of terrifying new entrants. Probably the latest examination syllabus, like its predecessors, was based on a compromise between various considerations, and more certainly has shared the fate of all such attempts.

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Few will, however, deny that the present syllabus offers a sound framework on which to base future developments, and it seems essential that, before all else, the Library Association should decide in which subjects to examine, what order they should take in the student's education, and what standard should be required. It is not proposed to consider these points in detail here, beyond suggesting that there is definite scope among the more purely technical subjects for some treatment of the ideals of public service and of the broad ethical principles underlying the existence of public libraries. The latter, in particular, is too often completely ignored by staff who, rightly or wrongly, see little in their routine duties requiring high ideals, and, as Mr. Flack writes in the November issue, having finished their education at seventeen or under, infrequently possess the mental equipment to counteract this defect.

What future, then, lies ahead for Schools of Librarianship? Granted reasonable financial support, whether from the State or from local authorities, or even from the members of the Library Association, it seems there is an almost completely clear field to operate. This is not to belittle the achievements of the London School between the wars. A former student fully appreciates the advantages of oral tuition by highly qualified lecturers, and can sincerely say that no small amount of his enthusiasm for bibliography, for instance, was there inspired and encouraged. The School was, however, heavily handicapped by meagre financial support and by the comparative inability of students to take advantage of the training, for under pre-war conditions only assistants in the London area could attend part-time courses, while only those in favourable financial circumstances could afford to sacrifice a potential income in order to undertake the full diploma course. That problem will have to be faced no matter what post-war social settlement is made, and it seems desirable that the Library Association should concentrate more on obtaining a supply of Library School trained assistants than in trying to offset the competition of university graduates. Should the Library Association proposals to divide librarians into Technical and Service Staff materialise, there would be considerably more inducement to parents to consider investing money on such an educational course, which would, in fact, be analogous to those now obtaining in the teaching profession, a factor which could not fail to prove of great future benefit to librarianship by making recruitment possible from a much larger section of the community. Should there be a State scheme for scholarships, the effect would be correspondingly greater, for young entrants could then afford the time for a full diploma course which would be equivalent to a university degree, and would carry with it the highest professional recommendations.

Having made the facilities of training available to newcomers, provision must be made for those already in the profession. These may be considered in two sections: (a) those who had not completed their training when called for service, and (b) those who had completed their examination syllabus, including those who consider they should have something of a "refresher course." The first will probably benefit under a Government scheme as after the last war, but, we hope, this time more effectively from the librarians' point of view. The second group is in reality always present, though for obvious reasons only the more outstanding members of the profession are aware of the problem. It seems most desirable that there should be available a series of week-end schools at which seminars could be arranged in conjunction with vital minds, and in surroundings less distracting than at the annual conferences, professional contacts could be made, ideas exchanged and, generally speaking, the deadening effects of routine broken down.

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For the more formal courses, it is suggested that much could be gained by applying the results of American schools, notably in the field of statistical research into population trends, reading tastes, and the diverse factors which affect the prosperity of the public library. Students would find much to interest them in field work of this nature, which, in addition to teaching them valuable lessons in method and independent thought, would achieve practical results of great moment to the profession. The time has surely gone by for students to spend all their time poring over books dealing only with minor day-to-day routine matters, and they should instead be encouraged to cultivate that efficiency of mind which adopts a method not because it "says so in Brown," good though such may be, but uses the method which has proved to be the one most efficient in the particular instance. Too often there is a kind of dead hand lying over any progress of this nature, and it should be the aim of the future schools to combat the frame of mind which is content to work in such conditions. It is hardly desirable for routine to be changed at the whim of any assistant, but it is equally wrong to assert that changes cannot be made owing to the fact that such has always been the local practice. Business efficiency methods have been slowly winning their way in libraries for the last few decades, often to the surprise of the public, but how much further it is possible to go, while still maintaining the dignity of our profession! Where are the principles of public relations or discreet advertising taught? How many librarians really train staff for specialist positions, or, having specialists on the staff, utilise them? Much benefit may result from a State inspectorate, vested with adequate powers, and certainly a central body able to investigate such matters and initiate reforms is long overdue.

A narrow factual examination syllabus probably cannot alone be adequate to achieve the ends we have in view, and it may be confidently asserted that under pre-war conditions nothing fundamental could have been attempted. One might well be reproached for envisaging an ever-increasing number of librarians possessing genuine culture, whether scientific or humanistic, yet, unless some such ideal is kept before us, the profession can never hope to gain the necessary inspiration with which to convince a public largely apathetic to its vast potentialities. Let us then consider what *should* be done, and not wait for the problem of "how." It seems the post-war period must be one of serious self-examination by the profession; existing structures may not be found adequate and new structures must be prepared with all the attendant upheavals, yet, though an ideal system can fortunately never be evolved, let us at least make certain that the door is left open for continual progress, and that there shall be nothing lost through complacency.

## On the Editor's Table

FREER, PERCY (Ed.). *Catalogue of Union periodicals*. Vol. I—Science and technology. Johannesburg, 1943. (No price given.)

A Union catalogue of scientific and technical periodicals held in libraries in the Union of South Africa. The list is edited by the Librarian of the University of the Witwatersrand. The arrangement is alphabetical under subjects, with abundant cross-references. Works in twenty-eight languages are catalogued, and abbreviated symbols represent each library. The list extends to 525 pages, and the editor is to be congratulated on the completion of an immense task.

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LEWIN, EVANS. *Royal Empire Society bibliographies*, Nos. 9 and 10. Royal Empire Society, 1943. No. 9, 5s.; No. 10, 2s. 6d.

These two bibliographies, edited by the Librarian of the Royal Empire Society, are both valuable guides to recent publications. No. 9 deals with recent publications on Africa, South of the Sahara. No. 10 with best books on the British Empire. Both bibliographies are arranged alphabetically under subject divisions.

LEYLAND, ERIC. *Librarianship as a career*. Vawser and Wiles. 1943. 2s.

This brief guide to librarianship should be of value to intending librarians, and might well be read by new assistants, for it is full of facts and sound common sense. A summary of the work in each department is given and there are chapters on examinations, salaries and prospects.

WIGHT, EDWARD A. *Public Library Finance and Accounting*. A.L.A. (Woolston). 1943. \$2.75.

This 175-page book is a complete conspectus of public library finance from the American point of view. Many of the forms and estimates are more minute in detail than those we are used to in England, and the system of budgeting has many differences. The final chapter on cost accounting contains much interesting matter, and the book as a whole is not without value to the English librarian.



## Correspondence

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Home Forces.

Sir,—

I wish to associate myself in every way with the sentiments expressed in the letter from Mr. Walford which appeared in the January issue of the *Assistant*.

From the Council proposals, it would appear that every delivery station in the United Kingdom is to be in the charge of an assistant who has (i) a degree, (ii) had a training for a period at some school of librarianship, or at least an equivalent education in the subject.

Now no one in the profession pretends that the service as at present given is 100 per cent. in all things, and one does not pretend that the average assistant is tip-top in his or her profession. But what would be the result of these measures which are envisaged?

The initial result would be—let's face it—an attitude of intellectual snobbery—however hard one tried to live it down, and a further increase in the great gulf fixed between the assistant and the borrower. Now, at the moment, one is not conscious of any patronising or pharisaical air towards the borrower; but during my four years in the Army (spent in various units at home and abroad, and consisting of men from all parts of the United Kingdom) I have met many who say that the rather frigid attitude adopted by many library assistants deters them from making fuller use of the library and its resources. Be that as it may, but it seems that this course in librarianship that is envisaged for *all* who enter the profession will further accentuate this attitude.

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On reading the progress made by the Council, one comes to the conclusion that from age 19 to 26 (at the earliest) one is to have no personal life apart from library work, as all one's spare time will be taken up by study. So this will tend to make librarians a race apart.

And after one has passed this course, what sort of a salary is one to receive? Highly paid posts are few in the profession, and for a less arduous course than there is envisaged one can get much higher salaries in other professions. Incidentally, during the year spent at the library school after passing the entrance examination—after one year's service only with a library authority, can one expect the local authority to pay one's salary for that year? And supposing one fails the Registration examination, what then? If one's salary is not paid, how is one going to live? Especially if one has commitments to one's family. Or is it essential that all would-be librarians should have a private income? In any case is this attitude likely to attract recruits? I think the result will be the opposite and many of the smaller local authorities will secede from the L.A.

Lastly—and this is a point of paramount importance—should such a project be launched when the majority of the younger members are in the Forces and scattered about all over the world, and therefore have no opportunity of meeting together and discussing these problems, and therefore cannot get a real understanding of these proposals? Many of us are in action now, and many of us have been in the past, and will be in the future, and even now are preparing feverishly for that day. Consequently we have neither time nor opportunity to study these things as they should be studied.

I understand that at meetings held recently, a large number of assistants still at work with library authorities have been favourably impressed with these proposals. I wonder how many of these, whom these measures affect, were present and aware of the ramifications and tergiversations of these proposals.

Therefore I urge every Service member to write and register his protest against any proposed attempt to adopt these proposals while so many of us are away, and to suggest that they wait till after the war, so that we can study and make our own amendments to them.

Yours sincerely, A. DENNIS C. ROOKE.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

B.N.A.F.

Sir,—

I have read with much interest Mr. Lock's letter in the November-December issue of the *Assistant*. It is gratifying to find, as evidenced by this and other letters which I have received, that there is a real interest in the future of Forces members of the profession.

The idea of appointing a liaison officer from the Council is, I think, a good one, but surely he would be much more effective if backed by a powerful section rather than being the means of bringing to notice various individual opinions. Furthermore, the co-ordination of these opinions and the presentation of our case can surely be done much better by those whose direct concern it is.

The Council has not, as yet, shown any sympathetic understanding of our position. Judging from the recent reports on post-war re-organisation, and more especially on professional training and qualifications, the outlook is very bleak indeed. There is no

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good reason, therefore, for hoping that a single representative, acting alone, could change the policy to any great extent.

Let us have a voice in the Council chamber by all means, but let us, by collective and virile support, ensure that this is something much more than "a voice crying in the wilderness."

It is self-evident that, under present circumstances, a section must be somewhat scattered but, provided that all those who are in a position to do so get together, there is no reason whatsoever why its efforts could not be welded together into a strong force.

In my present position, however, and owing to the urgency of the matter, I am forced to adopt the view that the method of attack must be regarded as of secondary importance so long as someone is prepared to do something *now*. The time-lag in communications makes it practically impossible for me to take any active part in formulating any scheme, but I offer my complete and unreserved support to any which may be initiated, and which those who are in a position to act think likely to be the most effective.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully, R. V. KEYWORTH.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Public Library, Shirley, Croydon.

Sir,—

Mr. A. J. Walford states, in his letter published in the January number of the *Assistant*, that "if your assistant declares that he has no time for spare-time study, then he is simply not worth his salt." Very true! But surely a far more common (though not often admitted) reason is that of "no energy for spare-time study?" Work in the average public library is strenuous physically and mentally, especially in work among children. From personal experience I can say that "spare-time study" is all too often a euphemism for "falling asleep over one's text-books." War-time conditions make study even more difficult, but even in normal times fatigue (perhaps increased by late working hours) is a serious handicap to the student. Therefore part-time work during the first year or two would be the surest means whereby "theory and practice might go hand in hand," thus allowing reasonable time for physical and mental recreation. No assistant can give the best service unless he can view his work in the light of experience gained outside the library as well as inside; nor can he build up a first-hand knowledge of books when the greater part of his spare time must of necessity be occupied by much text-book study.

This problem of the narrow outlook of the average assistant naturally leads on to Mr. Walford's point concerning "planned staff interchanges" similar to that system in force among teachers before the war. In common with several of my colleagues I feel that a system of exchange (perhaps for a year) with librarians of other countries would be invaluable for developing those attributes of education outlined in your correspondent's third paragraph, and the new ideas thus assimilated would not only be of value to the individual concerned but also serve for the improvement of the service as a whole.

Yours faithfully, (Miss) L. E. HOWLETT.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Central Public Library, Southampton.

Sir,—

I write to protest against that section of "The Public Library Service: its post-war re-organisation and development" which holds that extension work is not part



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of librarianship. I feel sure that such an attitude does not represent the ideas of the younger generation, most of whom are in the Forces and were too busy to take part in the discussion which preluded the plan. Many of those to whom I have talked deplore the literal-mindedness which sees in libraries merely a distributive agency. It is surely our job to make books live as well as to make them available. As has been remarked before, the librarian should be an artist. The work should be creative as well as technical. The report is symptomatic of that purring self-satisfaction and dodging of social fundamentals which in the past have made us the Cinderella of the Services. It will be admirable to have libraries available to all. Hand-in-hand with that task, however, we have to make books a living reality. The attitude to extension work seems to suggest that we have failed to realise this truth.

Yours, etc., HUBERT HUMBY.